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REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Letter dated 13 December 1993 from the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the enclosed United States paper on management initiatives, which I ask that you circulate in the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly as a document of the Fifth Committee, under agenda item 121, "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations".

(Signed) Madeleine K. Albright

Annex

MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES

The following is a summary of management initiatives to be considered in addition to the proposal for an Office of Inspector General:

(a) Conditions of service: Limits service of executive heads and all other elected officials of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and programmes to two consecutive terms of office;

(b) Code of conduct: The general duties and obligations of the United Nations staff are set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and further elaborated in the Staff Regulations and Rules. The Staff Regulations and Rules also form the "law" relating to the conduct of the staff. As not all compensated officials of the United Nations are covered by the Staff Regulations and Rules, we plan to submit for consideration a proposal which will establish a code of conduct for all officials receiving compensation from the United Nations;

(c) Financial disclosure statement: Require all senior level officials at the D-1 level and above, as well as staff in critical positions, i.e., contract and procurement officers, to submit an ethics disclosure statement. The information provided in the statement would allow the organization to determine if the financial interests of the staff member conflict with his/her official duties and responsibilities. Such a statement would be promulgated by the Secretary-General;

(d) Classification standards for senior level posts: Request the International Civil Service to establish classification standards for all posts at the D-1 level and above;

(e) Review of recruitment standards and practices: The International Civil Service Commission should be requested to review existing recruitment standards and practices used by United Nations agencies for bringing staff into the common system and to recommend changes and improvements that may be required in order for the United Nations system to meet the growing demands placed upon it;

(f) Fixed-term v. permanent appointments: There should be a fresh look at identifying the proper balance in the Secretariat between fixed-term and permanent appointments;

(g) Managerial training: Require all supervisors to attend management courses which emphasize their responsibilities and provide instruction on evaluating, rewarding and improving staff performance. Similarly, the courses should guide supervisors in the policies and methodologies for terminating staff for inadequate performance;

(h) System procurement facility: There should be greater effort by the different components of the United Nations and the agencies of the United Nations system to establish an effective system-wide procurement facility;

(i) Modern office technologies: Improved use of modern office technologies in the Secretariat should be encouraged in order to reduce administrative overhead costs;

(j) Internal controls: All managers must establish cost effective systems of management controls to ensure United Nations activities are managed effectively, efficiently, economically and with integrity. Each manager and supervisor, whether in accounting, administration, programme or budget, is responsible for ensuring adequate management controls;

(k) Contingency planning: Since payments of assessed contributions regularly fall short of actual assessments, the United Nations should develop plans to reduce spending levels to actual or anticipated income. This would encourage budgetary discipline and fiscal responsibility in the Secretariat, by targeting for reduction unnecessary programmes and administrative costs;

(l) Common accounting standards: There is no uniform set of accounting principles and standards for application among United Nations agencies. This lack of standardization makes it virtually impossible to make meaningful comparisons of financial and budgetary data among these organizations. The United Nations General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and Panel of External Auditors have strongly urged United Nations agencies and programmes to develop and implement such standards in order to enhance the transparency of financial statements and increase their utility.